

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 THE HA 01298 110815Z
ACTION INR-10

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FM AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2221
INFO AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
AMEMBASSY BONN
USMISSION USNATO
USMNR SHAPE
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY OSLO
USLOSACLANT
SECDEF WASHDC
USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GE

C O N F I D E N T I A L THE HAGUE 1298

QSNMR SHAPE FOR POLAD

USCINCEUR FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINR, NL
SUBJ: BIOGRAPHIC INFORMATION: NEW DUTCH MINISTER OF DEFENSE
WILLEM SCHOLTEN

REF: THE HAGUE 1197 (DTG 071511 MAR 18)

1. BEGIN UNGCLASSIFIED: NEW MINISTER OF DEFENSE FOR THE
NETHERLANDS WILLEM SCHOLTEN HAS A STRONG BACKGROUND IN
FINANCE. HE WAS BORN JUNE 1, 1927, IN DEVENTER. HE FINISHED
HIGH SCHOOL IN 1944; JUST AFTER THE WAR HE WORKED AS NEWSPAPER
REPORTER BEFORE ENROLLING IN THE ROTTERDAM TAX ACADEMY IN LATE
CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 02 THE HA 01298 110815Z

1945. AFTER COMPLETING HIS STUDIES, HE ENTERED THE GOVERNMENT TAX
SERVICE, PART OF THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE. IN 1951. HE WORKED
IN THE MINISTRY UNTIL 1963 WHEN HE WAS ELECTED TO PARLIAMENT
AS FINANCIAL EXPERT FOR THE CHRISTIAN HISTORICAL UNION (CHU-NOW A
PART OF CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC APPEAL, CDA). WHILE IN PARLIAMENT,
HE STUDIED AT AMSTERDAM UNIVERSITY, RECEIVING HIS DOCTORATE IN
TAX LAW IN 1965. IN 1971 HE BECAME STATE SECRETARY FOR FINANCE

IN THE BIESHEUVEL CABINET (1971-73). IN 1973 HE WAS REELECTED TO PARLIAMENT, REMAINING THERE UNTIL HIS DEPARTURE IN 1976 TO BECOME A MEMBER OF THE COUNCIL OF STATE. FROM 1973-76 HE WAS ALSO A MEMBER OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND IN THAT CAPACITY TRAVELED TO THAILAND, MALAYSIA, SINGAPORE, INDONESIA AND THE PHILIPPINES.

2. SCHOLTEN COMES FROM A CHURCH-ORIENTED FAMILY (DUTCH REFORMED). TO BECOME MINISTER, HE GAVE UP HIS MEMBERSHIP ON THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE NATIONALE INVESTERINGSBANK AND HIS EDITORSHIP OF A PROFESSIONAL WEEKLY ON TAX LAW. HE HAS ALSO BEEN SECRETARY OF THE CHU AND CHAIRMAN OF TWO OF ITS YOUTH ORGANIZATIONS. SCHOLTEN IS MARRIED TO THE FORMER CORNELIA VAN DER EIJK AND HAS TWO CHILDREN, A SON (21) AND A DAUGHTER (19) BOTH STUDENTS. PHOTOGRAPH BEING FORWARDED.
END UNCLASSIFIED

3. BEGIN CONFIDENTIAL. SCHOLTEN'S FINANCIAL EXPERTISE AND EXECUTIVE ABILITY ARE UNQUESTIONED. HIS PARLIAMENTARY EXPERIENCE IN DEFENSE AND OTHER MATTERS SHOULD SERVE HIM WELL AS HE FORMULATES AND ADMINISTERS POLICY IN A CABINET WHICH WILL HAVE TO DEAL CLOSELY WITH PARLIAMENT ON DEFENSE-RELATED ISSUES. ALTHOUGH SCHOLTEN SITS SOMEWHERE ON THE RIGHT SIDE OF THE POLITICAL SPECTRUM HERE, HE IS ON GOOD TERMS WITH THE SOCIALIST OPPOSITION. DURING THE LONG CABINET FORMATIONS TALKS LAST YEAR, CARETAKER SOCIALIST PREMIER DEN UYL PERSONALLY CONSIDERED SCHOLTEN AS THE BEST CHU
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PAGE 03 THE HA 01298 110815Z

CANDIDATE FOR A MINISTER'S POST.

4. IN CONTRAST TO HIS PREDECESSOR, SCHOLTEN PLANS TO STAY IN THE MINISTRY WHILE HE TAKES HOLD, LEAVING FOREIGN TRAVEL TO THE STATE SECRETARIES FOR THE TIME BEING. HE NEITHER DRINKS NOR SMOKES. ALTHOUGH HE COMES FROM A CONFESSORIAL PARTY THAT OPPOSES THE ERW, SCHOLTEN HAS PLEDGED LOYALTY TO THE GOVERNMENT'S POSITION. ONE OF SCHOLTEN'S FIRST MOVES WILL BE TO TRY AND CALM THE TROUBLED WATERS OF HIS PREDECESSOR.

5. SCHOLTEN COMMANDS WIDE RESPECT FROM HIS INTEGRITY AND CARRIES CONSIDERABLE PERSONAL AUTHORITY. ALTHOUGH HE SAW NO MILITARY SERVICE AND IS NOT PERSONALLY KNOWN BY SENIOR MILITARY OFFICERS, HIS FINANCIAL EXPERTISE IS RESPECTED IN MILITARY CIRCLES. HE APPEARS TO FAVOR A STRONG NATO COMMITMENT AND SUPPORTS A RESPONSIBLE DEFENSE POSTURE. IN NEGOTIATIONS HE IS LIKELY TO BE BOTH STIFF AND VERY WELL BRIEFED.
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